L4: Entry 7 of 8 File: USPT Oct 5, 1999

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5963916 A
TITLE: Network apparatus and method for preview of music products and compilation of of market data

Brief Summary Text (5):
Despite the explosion of CD player sales, most consumers own very few CDs (studies indicate the average CD player owner posses only nine discs). In large part, this is due to the fact that when it comes to purchasing a specific compact disc, the consumer is faced with several constraints and dilemmas. For example, compact discs are roughly twice the retail price ($14-$16) of LPs and cassettes and as a result, consumers are more reluctant to explore new and/or unproven artists for fear of wasting money. Moreover, there is the issue of "selection stress," a common problem for the average music buyer who is confronted with an enormous catalogue from which to choose and few mechanisms to assist her in evaluating these choices. This is exemplified by typical retail music stores which have developed the "superstore" format in which to promote its products. Unfortunately, the salespeople generally have not kept up with the sophistication of the market. Hence, consumers are at a clear disadvantage. Consumers often cannot sample or interact with the product while in the music store and they cannot return products they do not like. Therefore, although many consumers wish to build larger music collections, purchasing decisions are often risky and mistakes can be costly.

Brief Summary Text (10):
In order to provide for greater consumer exposure to artist's works, a number of different inventions have been designed. For example, a music sampling device called PICS Previews has been developed. Although it permits some in store sampling, its use is severely limited because its primary format is based on a particular hardware configuration which is not easily modifiable.

Brief Summary Text (13):
Perhaps the greatest advance in market exposure of a prerecorded product as of its issuance is U.S. Pat. No. 5,237,157 (the '157 patent) to Kaplan, from which this application continues. The '157 patent is directed to a user-interactive multi-media based point-of-preview system. In particular, interactive digital music sampling kiosks are provided to the retail music industry. In essence, the listening booth of the 1950s has been reborn and through the application of software and hardware technology has been brought into the next century.

Brief Summary Text (15):
The kiosk station provides access to music products through the sampling of individual selections as discrete increments of information. This allows the subscriber to make more educated purchases. The kiosk station thereby dramatically changes the way in which consumers purchase music. This increases buying activity and improves overall customer satisfaction. Moreover, the kiosk system stimulates sales gains for the record stores and provides record companies a cheaper and more effective promotional alternative which can sample consumer opinions at the point-of-sale level.

Detailed Description Text (16):

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A user starts at the idle screen 1 where she can touch the "start" section to begin. begin. From there, the user is shown screen 2 where she is asked to select a category to search (i.e. new releases or radio station hits). If she selects "new releases" she is asked to scan her I-Station card subscriber card. This identifies her to the system. From there, she is shown screen 4 which illustrates the different different music genres which can be searched (i.e. pop/dance or heavy metal). If a particular genre is selected, the user is shown screen 5 which illustrates the CD covers of the new releases in the chosen genre. After selecting a particular CD, the user is shown screen 6 which illustrates the CD cover and the tracks that can be previewed. After previewing a music sample, the user is shown screen 7 which requests a rating for that track. The user is then asked if she wants a printed record of her preview at screen 8. Screen 9 then asks the user if she wants to preview another selection. If not, the user is shown screen 11 which thanks the user for her use. The system then returns to the idle screen 1.

Detailed Description Text (17):
FIG. 6 illustrates an overview of the different search engines used with the original kiosk invention, the kiosk-based network embodiment (described below), and the network embodiment independent from a kiosk (described below). As with the previous figure, an example path will be described which will provide an understanding of the program's logical flow. This example discusses the search engines involved in a classical music search.

Detailed Description Text (18):
Starting at block 12, a user determines the initial search parameters (i.e. vocalist, composer, conductor). Depending on which parameter is chosen, the appropriate search engine is selected 13-18. Assuming the vocalist parameter 13 is selected, the vocalist list is provided to the user at block 19. The vocalist-by-composer search engine is then selected at block 21. The particular piece by the selected vocalist and composer is then selected at block 22. The particular album is then produced at block 23. Finally, the preview page is provided at block 24 where the user can preview the selected album.

Detailed Description Text (36):
FIG. 10 illustrates the main menu screen which allows the user to access particular paths by selecting (i.e. touching) specific hot zones 201-208. Although a number of different paths can be incorporated, the preferred embodiment described here includes a "Promotions" path (hot zone 201), a "General Music Search" path (hot zone 202), a "Classical Music Search" path (hot zone 203), a "New Releases" path (hot zone 204), an "Intune magazine" path (hot zone 205), a Top 10 By Genre" path (hot zone 206), a "Top 25 In Store" path (hot zone 207) and a "Merchandise" (hot zone 208) path. These path names are self-explanatory.

Detailed Description Text (45):
FIG. 17 provides cover illustrations of related albums 272-283 that can be accessed by selecting the "Related Albums" hot zone 258 shown in FIG. 14. The albums identified by the web site as related albums are determined by administrators of the web site server. When a new song or album is stored in the system storage, the administrator determines which albums will be accessed when the related albums function is accessed. The parameters used in determining which albums will be designated as a "related album" include, for example, other albums with the same artist. Once a related album list is generated, that list is linked with the new song or album. When a web site user selects the related albums feature, a script is executed which locates the appropriate related albums list and provides the web site user with access to the related albums on the list.

Detailed Description Text (47):
According to the preferred embodiment of the present invention, once a user has previewed an album or a particular track from an album, the network web site prompts her for a rating of the selection. FIG. 19 illustrates a "Sample Ratings"

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screen wherein the user is provided with an image of the album or track 400 he or she has just previewed, and a five scale rating system 401-405. The system maintains maintains the ratings in a database and correlates the ratings information with the user's ID and demographic information (e.g., age, sex, geographic location, etc.). These ratings and corresponding demographic information can be sold to music companies in the form of reports for market research. The format of the reports can be customized depending on the parameters chosen. It is a simple procedure to gather gather information from a database using particular parameters.

Detailed Description Text (49):
FIG. 21 illustrates the initial screen for conducting a classical music search. The screen illustrates six hot zones 408-413 which allow a user to perform searches in particular classical music categories (i.e. paths). Although not limited to particular types or a particular number of categories, the preferred embodiment of the present invention includes a "Composer" category (hot zone 408), a "Conductor" category (hot zone 409), an "Instrumentalist" category (hot zone 410), a "Vocalist" category (hot zone 411), an "Ensemble" category (hot zone 412) and a "Collection" category (hot zone 413). These path names are self-explanatory.

Detailed Description Text (55):
An alternate embodiment of the present kiosk-based network invention incorporates the bar code reader feature of the original kiosk invention. This allows the web site user to quickly and conveniently access a particular album or song without having to manually type in the selection's title. The bar code reader reads the UPC code on an album and searches for the stored data which corresponds to that UPC code. That information can include an album cover, track list, and pre-selected and pre-recorded music samples.

Detailed Description Text (65):
FIG. 40 illustrates the "Store Directory" accessible by selecting hot zone 327. This directory includes the different music departments within the virtual retail store divided by musical genre. A web site user can visit (i.e., access) any of these departments by selecting one of the genres 332 shown on the screen. Also illustrated in this screen are five hot zones 334-338 which allow provide the web site user with quick access to specific departments. For example, hot zone 334 allows the web site user to go back to the lobby, hot zone 335 allows the web site user to perform a music search, hot zone 336 allows the web site user to visit the information center which provides the web site user with information about the World Wide Music virtual retail store, hot zone 337 allows the web site user to see what she has in her shopping basket and hot zone 338 provides the web site user with information on ordering specific products. It should be noted that each of the different hot zones illustrated in the lobby of FIG. 38 can be provided at the bottom of the web site screens similarly to hot zones 334-338.

Detailed Description Text (66):
FIG. 41 illustrates the "Pop/Dance" department which can be accessed by selecting the "Pop/Dance" genre illustrated in FIG. 40. This department is similar to the main lobby illustrated in FIG. 38 with similar hot zones except that here, the different features relate to the pop/dance genre. For example, the "Top 10" hot zone 339 will provide the web site user with a list of the top ten pop/dance tracks. Similarly, selecting the "Music Search" hot zone 340 will allow the web site site user to perform a search of only pop/dance works.

Detailed Description Text (69):
Referring back to FIG. 38, hot zone 310 provides access to the "Merchandise" department providing merchandise which the web site user can purchase. Hot zone 312 provides access to the "Music Search" feature of the web site illustrated in FIGS. 46-50. This allows web site users to search for a particular musical work using a number of different formats.

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Detailed Description Text (70):
FIG. 46 illustrates the starting music search screen wherein a web site user is able able to search the different categories generally or by a specific genre such as classical music. The web site user can select a general search (hot zone 341) which will take her to the general search screen illustrated in FIG. 47. Here a web site user can perform a key word search. For example, the web site user can select a search by artist name (hot zone 343), album name (hot zone 344) or song title (hot zone 345) and then enter the search terms in the "Search For" field 346.

Detailed Description Text (72):
If a user decides to search the "Classical" genre, the classical search screen illustrated in FIG. 48 will be provided. This screen prompts the user to select particular search parameters. For example, the user can search by "Composer" (hot zone 347), "Conductor" (hot zone 348). "Ensemble" (hot zone 349), "Instrumentalist" (hot zone 350), "Vocalist" (hot zone 351) and "Collections" (hot zone 352). Once the user has selected a particular parameter (i.e. Composer), the corresponding search screen (i.e. see FIG. 49 for the Composer search screen) allows her to search by key word by entering the key terms in the "Search For" field 353 and selecting "Submit Search" (hot zone 354).

Detailed Description Text (77):
Next to each track pre-recorded track title are two hot zones 378 and 379. Hot zone 378 allows the user to download the music sample for playback by the user. Hot zone 379 allows the user to use the RealAudio 2.0 player to directly sample the musical recording.

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L16: Entry 1 of 3 File: USPT Dec 29, 1998

DOCUMENT-IDENTIFIER: US 5855008 A
TITLE: Attention brokerage

Brief Summary Text (42):
Many businesses keep profiles of customer interests and transactions. (For example, some supermarkets keep customer profiles via "savings cards" that allow the market to track each person's purchases and tailor individual promotions.) The system provided by the present invention offers several innovative features and applications for such profiles. Profiles can be private (pseudonymous). That is, they can be used and even marketed while protecting the customer's identity. For example, a merchant may be permitted scan a profile to determine his affinity for the customer, but cannot learn the customer's name or address. Contacts between advertisers and consumers can be brokered by a "profile bank" that protects the consumer's privacy.

Detailed Description Text (7):
For example, FIG. 2 schematically shows a transaction involving "positively priced information." Suppose a consumer requests valuable information such as, for example, a television program, prerecorded music, magazine or newspaper articles, or a research report. In this example, consumers may request such information through consumer computers 104, and the information can be delivered to the consumers in digital form via the consumer computers and/or by other means. In this example, the consumers requesting and consuming such information are asked to compensate the providers of such information. FIG. 2 shows an information provider providing valuable information 50 with a "price tag" 52 stating how much the information costs, and requesting compensation in this amount (as signified by the open hand 54). Of course, the physical transaction shown in FIG. 2 is only for purposes of illustration--since in this example the actual transaction takes place electronically. In particular, an electronic "price tag" 52 (i.e., a request for payment) may be presented to the consumer's computer 104. The consumer (or her software agent 110) may satisfy the request for payment by providing an appropriate amount of digital cash and/or by authorizing financial clearinghouse 108 to debit her account in the appropriate amount. Upon receipt of such payment or payment authorization, the information provider may release the valuable information 50 to the consumer (e.g., by transmitting it over network 102 and/or by providing consumer computer 104 with a decryption key or other information needed to release it from an information container or other protected form).

Detailed Description Text (75):
Matching of interest profiles 124 with ads can be performed using "relevance indexing" based on hierarchical tree structures. For example, suppose, the user likes Thelonius Monk, jazz trios, and popular vocal music. The ad or other information relates to Shirley Horn's album You Won't Forget Me. The matching algorithm picks up a mild relevance from the fact that this is jazz piano music (even though it isn't Monk), and a strong relevance from the fact that it is popular female vocal music. The algorithm only has to look up and down the branches of the tree that contain index points. The tree itself can be dynamically maintained: a node that is over-populated with index points can be subdivided, while a node that is sparsely populated can be merged with its parent. A child node

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is only required to represent a subset of the parent--it is not required to be disjoint from a sibling.

Detailed Description Text (94):
Referring once again to FIG. 11, software agent 110 in this example may display "coupons" in addition to CyberCoins 62 a coupon 63 can be used to start a self-executing process to bring ads to consumers A coupon 63 bypasses the profile matching process described above, by allowing the consumer to directly express a desire to receive information about a certain product or service (or a certain class of products or services). For example, if the consumer "clips" a coupon directed to non-fat desserts, the consumer's software agent 110 will automatically search for ads that are associated with that coupon and retrieve thumbnail descriptions of all such ads (FIG. 11A, blocks 196, 198). Such coupons may be issued by particular manufacturers of goods or services, or they may be more generic and directed to ranges or classes of goods or services. In this example, a coupon icon 63 is displayed on the consumer's compute 104 to indicate the coupon is active, and associated thumbnail descriptions retrieved by the software agent 110 are displayed adjacent the coupon icon (as shown in FIG. 11). The consumer may view the associated ad by simply clicking on the coupon icon 63.

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